



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

IX. — *The Nikias of Pasiphon and Plutarch.*

BY PROFESSOR B. PERRIN,

YALE UNIVERSITY.

OF the four usual divisions of a *Life* by Plutarch — the γένος, παιδεία, ἥθος, and πράξεις — his *Nikias* has only the last two, the ἥθος and the πράξεις. It is generally inferred from this that no special biography of Nikias, either Peripatetic or Alexandrine, was available for Plutarch's use. At any rate, in his opening chapter, Plutarch gives us an unusually precise programme of his procedure in the composition of this *Life*. He will not presume, like Timaios, to vie with Thoukydides and Philistos, the primary historians of the Peloponnesian war and the Sicilian expedition. But "those doings which Thoukydides and Philistos have set forth, since I cannot pass them utterly by, especially as they indicate the man's nature and the disposition which lay hidden beneath his many great sufferings, I have run over briefly, and as I felt compelled to do in order to escape the reputation of being altogether careless and slothful; but those *details* which have *escaped the notice of most writers*, and which others have told in *disconnected fashion* (σποράδην), as they found them on ancient votives or decrees (ἀναθήμασιν ἢ ψηφίσμασιν), I have tried to *collect* (συναγαγεῖν), not massing together useless material of research, but handing on only such as furthers the appreciation of natural character."

Nothing could be more frank or clear. Thoukydides and Philistos were not biographers of Nikias, but historians of the Peloponnesian war and of Sicily, for both of whom the Sicilian expedition was a major episode. Their stories of this expedition Plutarch will condense and combine, with the special aim of illustrating the "nature and disposition" of Nikias, and to such condensation and combination he will add sundry details which he has compiled from other writers, who found them on votive offerings or in decrees, again exer-

cising his discretion in using only such details as will illustrate the character of Nikias.

In the main body of his *Nikias*, the *πράξεις*, cc. VI.–XXX., Plutarch clearly carries out this programme to the letter. Thoukydides furnishes him with the main framework, upon which are skilfully brought covering and ornamental material from Philistos, who was an eye-witness in Syracuse of the events of the Athenian siege; from Timaios, in a third degree, in spite of the more than Polybian censure of this censor with which the opening chapter is weighted down; and from Philochoros, Krateros, and Theophrastos, whom he here, as often, gladly uses. No essential exception can be taken to Busolt's able analysis<sup>1</sup> of this part of the *Life*.

But for the first main division of the *Life*, the *ἦθος*, comprising cc. II.–V., I find myself inclined to differ with Busolt, who insists that the literary mosaic here is due, not so much to Plutarch as to a certain unknown "learned editor of Theopompos," who has already been much used by Plutarch in his *Kimon* and *Perikles* (Busolt, *Griech. Geschichte*, III, pp. 35 f., 238 f.). It is not my purpose to argue out here in all fulness my position on a question where subjective propensity must after all give the decisive impulse. Suffice it to say that I believe Plutarch himself to be the "learned editor of Theopompos," both here and in the *Kimon* and *Perikles*. This is not to claim for Plutarch the name of a learned investigator, but simply that of a learned compiler, to which I am sure he is entitled. Nor is it to claim that all or even most of his citations are at first hand. Some of them certainly are not. The programme which he so carefully lays down for himself at the beginning of the *Nikias* promises compilation, and compilation from compilers. He is admittedly true to his programme in the second and major part of the *Nikias*; he is no less so, I believe, in the first.

A brief analysis of this first main division of the *Nikias* — the *ἦθος*, comprising the four chapters immediately following the eminently original chapter of introduction — gives the following result: (1) A citation is made by name from Aristotle's

<sup>1</sup> *Plutarch's Nikias und Philistos*, Hermes, xxxiv. (1899), pp. 280 ff.

*Athenian Polity* (c. XXVIII. 5), ranking Nikias, Thoukydides son of Melesias, and Theramenes as βέλτιστοι of Athens (c. II. 1). But the citation is so garbled, and is succeeded by a passage of such contradictory strain, as to justify the general belief that it was made at second hand. (2) The political position and military career of Nikias before and immediately after the death of Perikles are then briefly described (c. II. 2), necessarily from some source other than Thoukydides. For Thoukydides has only two brief notices of Nikias prior to the affair of Pylos and Sphakteria, viz., his expedition against Minoa, in the summer of the fifth year of the war, 427 B.C. (iii. 51), which was measurably successful, and that against Melos, in the summer of the sixth year of the war, 426 B.C. (iii. 91), which was unsuccessful, and resolved itself into a predatory foray into Boiotia. This source other than Thoukydides may have been that part of the tenth book of the *Philippica* of Theopompos which was devoted to a characterization of the Athenian demagogues, although what we can learn of this digression does not warrant us in assuming in it much detail of actual event.

(3) Plutarch next contrasts Nikias and Kleon as leaders of the people, in a passage which goes back ultimately, whether through Theopompos or not, to contemporary comedy (c. II. 2-4). Next (4) the methods of Perikles and Nikias in winning the favor of the people are contrasted, and the liturgies and dedications of Nikias are described in great detail, especially his brilliant conduct of a *θεωρία* to Delos (c. III. 1-6). This material clearly comes from Philochoros, Kleidemos, or other *Atthis*-writers.

(5) The fourth chapter of Plutarch I shall cite entire. "In this course it is clear that there was much ostentatious publicity, looking toward increase of reputation and gratification of ambition; and yet, to judge from the rest of the man's bent and character, one might feel sure that such favor and control of the people as he secured were rather a corollary to his reverent piety, for he was one of those who are excessively terrified at heavenly portents, and was *θειασμῷ προσκείμενος*, as Thoukydides says (vii. 50).

"And in one of the dialogues of Pasiphon it is recorded that he sacrificed every day to the gods, and that he kept a diviner at his house, ostensibly for the constant inquiries which he made about public matters, whereas most of his inquiries were really made about his own private affairs, and especially about his silver mines; for he had large interests in the mining district of Laureion, and they were exceedingly profitable, although worked at great risks. He maintained a multitude of slaves in these mines, and the most of his substance was in silver bullion. For this reason he had a large retinue of people who wanted his money, and who got it too; for he gave to those who could work him harm no less than to those who deserved his favors, and in general his cowardice was a source of revenue to the base as his liberality was to the good.

"Witness to this can be had from the comic poets. Telekleides composed the following verses on a certain public informer:

Χαρικλέης μὲν οὖν ἔδωκε μνᾶν, ἵν' αὐτὸν μὴ λέγῃ  
ὥς ἔφν τῇ μητρὶ παίδων πρῶτος ἐκ βαλλαντίου.  
τέσσαρας δὲ μνᾶς ἔδωκε Νικίας Νικηράτου·  
ὧν δ' ἑκατὶ τοῦτ' ἔδωκε, καίπερ εὖ εἰδὼς ἐγώ,  
οὐκ ἐρῶ, φίλος γὰρ ἀνὴρ, σωφρονεῖν δέ μοι δοκεῖ.

"And the personage who is held up to ridicule by Eupolis, in his *Marikas*, fetches in a sort of lazy pauper, and says:

M. πόσου χρόνον γὰρ συγγεγένησαι Νικία;  
Π. οὐδ' εἶδον, εἰ μὴ νυχχὸς ἐστῶτ' ἐν ἀγορᾷ.  
M. ἀνὴρ ὁμολογεῖ Νικίαν ἑορακέμαι.  
καίτοι τί παθὼν ἂν εἶδεν, εἰ μὴ προὔδιδον;  
ἠκούσατ', ὦ ξυνήλικες,  
ἐπ' αὐτοφώρῳ Νικίαν εἰλημμένον.  
Π. ὑμεῖς γάρ, ὦ φρενοβλαβεῖς,  
λάβοιτ' ἂν ἄνδρ' ἄριστον ἐν κακῷ τινί;

"And the Kleon of Aristophanes blusteringly says:

λαρυγγῶ τοὺς ῥήτορας καὶ Νικίαν ταράξω.

"And Phrynichos gently hints at his lack of courage and his panic-stricken air in these verses:

ἦν γὰρ πολίτης ἀγαθός, ὡς εὖ οἶδ' ἐγώ,  
κοῦχ ὑποταγὴς ἐβαδίζεν, ὥσπερ Νικίας."

Of the following chapter, the fifth, which closes the ἡθος-division of the *Life*, I wish to speak later, after due discussion of the fourth. This fourth chapter, it is seen, readily falls into three parts, adducing three testimonies to the timidity of Nikias, one from Thoukydides, one from a dialogue of Pasiphon, and one, or rather several, from Old Comedy. The testimony of Thoukydides is anticipated chronologically from his description of the eclipse of the moon as the Athenians were preparing to leave Syracuse, and its effect upon Nikias and the army (vii. 50, 1). The passage is so impressive and notorious that no suspicion of Plutarch's taking it at second hand is justifiable. The farrago of citations from Old Comedy, on the other hand, Plutarch may well have taken bodily from some scholiastic source, or possibly from Theopompos, and so have been saved the labor of such compilation. On the citation from Pasiphon's dialogue I wish to dwell more at length.

Pasiphon is so rare an author now, and for the modern scholar, that Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and Busolt have assumed without hesitation that Plutarch cites him at second hand; and Busolt makes this citation, as well as the farrago of extracts from Old Comedy, part of the apparatus with which his imaginary "learned editor" enriched Theopompos. Now one need not differ at all from Eduard Meyer's estimate<sup>1</sup> of Plutarch's method of procedure in composing his *Kimon*, and yet may consistently hold to a different method in the *Nikias*, where, as has been said, there are distinct indications that Plutarch had no ready-made biography before him. And if it can be shown that Pasiphon was an author with whom Plutarch, from the nature of his favorite studies and readings, would naturally be acquainted, and that the particular dialogue here cited would naturally contain much of just that sort of testimony about Nikias in which the citation is here imbedded, and which can be traced to no other source with

<sup>1</sup> *Forschungen zur alten Geschichte*, II, pp. 22 f.

exclusive probability, then the claim that Plutarch cites Pasiphon here at first hand becomes, to say the least, tenable.

The wonderful personality of Socrates called into being a new form of literary expression — the dialogue. Among the immediate disciples of Socrates who, after the Master's death, cultivated and excelled in this literary form, were, besides Xenophon and Plato, Aischines, Phaido, Eukleides, and Antisthenes. The last three were regarded as founders of philosophic schools, the Elean, the Megarian, and the Cynic. The essential similarity of their styles and methods seems to have led to much confusion among ancient writers as to the authorship of their various dialogues, especially as it became a not infrequent practice of their successors and pupils to attribute to them dialogues of their own composition. In many cases this was doubtless literary fraud, committed, as Susemihl suggests, in order to profit by the feverish demand for philosophical works to stock the rival libraries of Diadochi and Epigoni. In others it was doubtless literary artifice with no intent to deceive.

Either as literary deceiver, or as literary artist, or both, Pasiphon of Eretria — probably a pupil of that Menedemos who practically constitutes the Eretrian school, into which the Elean school was merged, and who in his turn was a pupil of Phaido — seems to have busied himself with the composition of Socratic dialogues which he attributed to the immediate disciples of Socrates. At least that must be the general impression to be had from the somewhat confused and uncertain testimony of Diogenes Laertios. On Aischines he says (ii. 60, 61), "accusations were made against Aischines, and especially by Menedemos the Eretrian, of appropriating most of his dialogues from Socrates through the mediation of Xanthippe. Of these dialogues, the so-called ἀκέφαλοι are very diffuse, and show nothing of the Socratic vigor. Peisistratos the Ephesian said they were not the work of Aischines. And even of the (other) seven, Persaios says that most were the work of Pasiphon the Eretrian, and were by him imputed to Aischines. So the *Little Kuros* and the *Lesser Herakles* and the *Alkibiades* of Antisthenes, and simi-

lar works of the other disciples, were imputed to them by Pasiphon." Then follows a list of the seven genuine dialogues of Aischines which display the real Socratic character, viz., the *Miltiades*, *Kallias*, *Axiochos*, *Aspasia*, *Alkibiades*, *Telauges*, and *Rhinon*.

Whatever the worth of this testimony, the fact remains that so competent and sane a judge as Persaios — the pupil of Zeno, the literary counsellor of Antigonos Gonatas, and his "philosophical governor," as Plutarch calls him (*Aratos*, XVIII.), when he wished his most trusty men to hold the prize of Akro-Korinthos — attributed most of the seven dialogues usually ascribed to Aischines to Pasiphon. Even if we hold, with Susemihl (*Alex. Lit.* i. p. 201), that Diogenes is in error, and believe that Persaios spoke, not of the seven genuine dialogues of Aischines, but of the *ἀκέφαλοι*, the most essential fact for our argument will still remain, that Pasiphon composed dialogues under the name of Aischines. If Diogenes is right in his report of what Persaios said, he composed them so successfully as to deceive the very elect, and in the real Socratic manner.

One of these genuine dialogues of Aischines, which Diogenes says Persaios said were mostly the work of Pasiphon, was entitled *Kallias*. There can be no reasonable doubt that it is from this dialogue that Plutarch cites the long and dramatic story of the rich Kallias and the poor Aristeides (*Aristeides*, XXV.). Considering the direction of Plutarch's special studies, his philosophical sympathies, and especially his fondness for and familiarity with Panaitios the Stoic, and there is no good ground for denying Plutarch's acquaintance at first hand with this *Kallias* of Aischines, or his knowledge of the fact that Pasiphon of Eretria was held by good judges to be the author of many dialogues attributed to Aischines. If the dialogue of Aischines had been an *Aristeides* instead of a *Kallias*, our belief that Plutarch consulted it at first hand in writing his own *Aristeides* would be all the stronger. And if a dialogue entitled *Nikias* by either Aischines or Pasiphon were current, it would surely, in the dearth of material for the life of Nikias before Thoukydides begins to note his

career, be a most welcome and fruitful source for Plutarch's use.

"Of all the Socratic dialogues," Diogenes goes on to say (ii. 64), "Panaítios thinks that those of Plato, Xenophon, Antisthenes, and Aischines are genuine; about those attributed to Phaido and Eukleides he is doubtful; the rest he rejects entirely." Panaítios, then, a writer with whom Plutarch shows great familiarity in his *Aristeides* (not to mention also his *Kimon* and *Demosthenes*), was a prime authority for Diogenes on the subject of the authenticity of the multitudinous Socratic dialogues, and he was doubtful about the authenticity of those attributed to Eukleides and Phaido. With these Megarian and Elean disciples of Socrates the Eretrian school, through Menedemos its founder and chief representative, would naturally be in most sympathetic touch, and it would not surprise us therefore to find that Pasiphon the Eretrian — a presumable pupil of Menedemos, who, in turn, was a pupil of Phaido — was a successful imitator, not to say counterfeiter of the dialogues of Phaido, as he notoriously was of those of "Aischines, Antisthenes, and the other disciples," according to the passage first cited from Diogenes (p. 144).

Two genuine dialogues are allowed Phaido by Diogenes (ii. 105), the *Zopyros* and the *Simon*. About a *Nikias*, also attributed to him, Diogenes says there was some doubt, and other dialogues attributed to him were claimed by some critics for Aischines, whom Pasiphon so successfully imitated. It does not seem, therefore, an unauthorized step which Susemihl (*Alex. Lit.* i. p. 21) and Wilamowitz (*Antigonos von Karystos*, p. 142, note) confidently take, in holding that the Socratic dialogue *Nikias*, which Diogenes hesitates to attribute to Phaido, was really the work of the great imitator of the Socratic disciples, Pasiphon, and that it is from this dialogue that Plutarch cites in the fourth chapter of his *Nikias* (see p. 142). The chain of reasoning is not as perfect as we could wish, and Hirzel (*Der Dialog*, i. p. 111, note) hesitates to accept it; still it is better than we usually get in matters of this sort: Pasiphon of Eretria was a wholesale imitator or

counterfeiter of Socratic dialogues; Phaido, the spiritual founder of the Eretrian school to which Pasiphon presumably belonged, wrote Socratic dialogues; a *Nikias* is attributed to him by some and denied him by other ancient critics; a *Nikias* attributed to Pasiphon is to be posited from Plutarch's *Nikias*, c. IV.; this presumptive *Nikias* of Pasiphon is identical with the dubious *Nikias* of Phaido.

With such a Socratic dialogue, in the absence of any formal biography of *Nikias*, we should expect Plutarch, in writing his *Nikias*, both from the trend of his philosophical reading, and from his evident familiarity with Aischines the Socratic and Panaitios the critic of the Socratic dialogue, to be acquainted, and acquainted at first hand. It would rather surprise us if he were not. "Rare" the book may have become in time, but not surely in the schools of philosophy when Plutarch studied under Ammonius at Athens.

How fruitful a source for biographical material such a Socratic dialogue might be, can be seen from the most cursory glance at some of the Platonic dialogues—the *Laches* and the *First Alkibiades*, for instance—from which many details of the family and daily life of *Nikias* and *Alkibiades* may be culled. The more authentic these details, the more the dialogue gains in dramatic verisimilitude. Even unauthentic and invented details must be given an air of plausibility, as was done by Praxiphanes in his dialogue *περὶ ἰστορίας*, with invented details of the life of *Thoukydides* which find a place in the late biographies of that author.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the *Nikias* of Pasiphon, which may safely be assigned to the first half of the third century B.C., the artistic verisimilitude in biographical details must have been secured by reference to good historical sources for the private life of *Nikias*. The most natural and accessible sources must have been the comic poets, whose testimonies can be shown to supply many a Platonic dialogue with the personal details desired.<sup>2</sup> Theopompos also would have been accessible to, and a fruitful source for Pasiphon.

<sup>1</sup> Hirzel, *Hermes*, xiii. p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Socrates' citation from the *Clouds* in Plato's *Apology* will occur to every one.

Now it is in citations from the comic poets and reminiscences of Theopompos that we find the citation from Pasi-phon's *Nikias* imbedded in the fourth and fifth chapters of Plutarch's *Nikias*. The fourth chapter has already been cited (pp. 3 f.), and the fifth may now follow :

(6) "Since he was disposed to such caution as this in his attitude toward the public informers, he would neither dine out with any citizen nor indulge in public interchange of views or social intercourse. Indeed, he had no time at all for such avocations, but when he was general he remained at the war department till night, and when he was senator he was first to reach and last to leave the senate. And even if he had no public business to transact, he was inaccessible and hard to come at, keeping closely at home with his doors bolted. His friends used to accost those who were waiting at his door and beg them to be indulgent, for that Nikias was even then engaged upon sundry urgent matters of public business.

"The man who most aided him in playing this rôle and helped him assume his costume of pompous dignity was Hiero, who had been reared in the household of Nikias and thoroughly trained by him in letters and poetry. He pretended to be a son of Dionysios surnamed *Chalkous*, whose poems are actually extant, and who, as leader of a colonizing expedition to Italy, founded Thourioi. This Hiero it was who managed for Nikias his secret dealings with the seers, and who was forever putting forth among the people moving tales of the life of severe hardships which Nikias led for the sake of the city. 'Why!' said he, 'even when he takes his bath and when he eats his dinner some public business or other is sure to confront him ; he neglects his private interests in his anxiety for the common good, and scarcely gets to sleep by midnight. That is why he is physically all run down, and is not affable or pleasant to his friends. Nay, he has actually lost his friends also, in addition to his substance, and all in the service of the city. Other public men not only win friends, but enrich themselves by means of their influence with the people, and then enjoy themselves and make a plaything of the service of the city.'

“In point of fact, such was the life of Nikias that he could say of himself as Agamemnon did :

‘προστάτην δὲ τοῦ βίου  
τὸν ὄγκον ἔχομεν, τῷ δ’ ὀχλῷ δουλεύομεν.’”

All the material of this fifth chapter of Plutarch's biography is of just that spicy sort which Old Athenian Comedy loved to deal out to its public, and may well have been taken from that source, or from Theopompos, or from both, by Pasiphon, to give vivacity and verisimilitude to his *Nikias*. No “learned editor” is needed for Theopompos. He was a learned investigator himself, and may himself have compiled the passages from Old Comedy in which we find fragments of his testimony imbedded, not only here but elsewhere. Pasiphon used him freely (either with or without independent recurrence to Old Comedy), to get biographical material for his setting of a dialogue *Nikias*; and Plutarch used Pasiphon's dialogue (with or without independent recurrence to Theopompos), for that early part of the life of Nikias where his main sources, Philistos and Thoukydides, failed him entirely. My inclination is to regard most of the material of the fourth and fifth chapters of Plutarch's *Nikias* as due to the *Nikias* of Pasiphon directly.